

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1        1. A game ball comprising:
  - 2              a casing having a laced region; and
  - 3              a lacing coupled to the laced region of the casing, the lacing having an exposed surface, at least a portion of the exposed surface of the lacing having a pebbled texture.
- 1        2. The game ball of claim 1, wherein the entire exposed surface of the lacing includes the pebbled texture.
- 1        3. The game ball of claim 1, wherein the pebbled texture comprises a plurality of spaced apart pebble-like projections.
- 1        4. The game ball of claim 3, wherein the plurality of projections are selected from the group consisting of irregularly shaped pebble-like projections, hemispherically shaped projections, generally oval shaped projections, generally triangular shaped projections, generally square shaped projections, generally rectangular shaped projections, generally diamond shaped projections, generally pentagon-shaped projections, other polygonal shaped projections, conical projections, frustoconical projections, cylindrical projections, pyramid-shaped projections, cubic projections, and combinations thereof.
- 1        5. The game ball of claim 3, wherein the plurality of projections are arranged in a generally evenly spaced pattern across at least a portion of the exposed surface.
- 1        6. The game ball of claim 3, wherein the plurality of projections are randomly arranged across at least a portion of the exposed surface.

1           7.       The game ball of claim 3, wherein the plurality of projections are  
2 generally of equal size.

1           8.       The game ball of claim 3, wherein the plurality of projections include  
2 projections of two or more different sizes.

1           9.       The game ball of claim 3, wherein each of the pebble-like projections  
2 has a maximum length and a maximum width, and wherein the maximum length and  
3 the maximum width define an aspect ratio of within 0.2 and 5.0.

1           10.      The game ball of claim 9, wherein the aspect ratio is within 0.33 and  
2 3.0.

1           11.      The game ball of claim 4 wherein the lacing includes at least one  
2 longitudinally extending segment and a plurality of transversely extending segments,  
3 wherein the plurality of projections on the longitudinally extending segment have a first  
4 shape, and wherein the plurality of projections on the transversely extending segment  
5 have a second shape.

1           12.      The game ball of claim 4, wherein the entire exposed surface of the  
2 lacing includes a plurality of pebble-like projections.

1           13.      The game ball of claim 4, wherein the lacing further comprises an inner  
2 substrate and an outer layer, wherein the outer layer includes the exposed surface, and  
3 wherein the inner substrate is formed from one or more materials selected from the  
4 group consisting of a woven cloth, a non-woven cloth, a urethane impregnated cloth, at  
5 least one nylon strand, at least one polyester strand, a metal wire, a plastic, a vinyl, a  
6 polymer, a latex, a rope, a leather strip and a combination thereof.

1           14.      The game ball of claim 12 wherein the outer layer is made of an outer  
2 material selected from the group consisting of a wet process polyurethane, a dry

3 process polyurethane, a coagulated polyurethane, a polyvinylchloride foam, a rubber, a  
4 polymeric material, an elastomeric material, and a combination thereof.

1       15.     A game ball comprising:  
2              a casing having a laced region; and  
3              a lacing coupled to the laced region of the casing, the lacing having an  
4              exposed surface and a plurality of spaced-apart projections extending over at least a  
5              portion of the exposed surface, the spaced-apart projections defining a plurality of  
6              valleys, the projections having a height of between 0.002 and 0.250 inches.

1       16.     The game ball of claim 15, wherein the projections are pebble-like  
2     projections.

1       17.     The game ball of claim 16, wherein the height of the pebble-like  
2     projections range between 0.003 and 0.100 inches.

1       18.     The game ball of claim 16, wherein the pebble-like projections have a  
2     height of at least 0.004 inches.

1       19.     The game ball of claim 16, wherein the pebble-like projections have a  
2     height of at least 0.005 inches.

1       20.     The game ball of claim 16, wherein the pebble-like projections have a  
2     height of at least 0.010 inches.

1       21.     The game ball of claim 16, wherein the entire exposed surface of the  
2     lacing includes the pebble-like projections.

1       22.     The game ball of claim 16, wherein the plurality of pebble-like  
2     projections are selected from the group consisting of irregularly shaped pebble-like  
3     projections, hemi-spherically shaped pebble-like projections, generally oval shaped

4 pebble-like projections, generally triangular shaped pebble-like projections, generally  
5 square shaped pebble-like projections, generally rectangular shaped pebble-like  
6 projections, generally diamond shaped pebble-like projections, generally pentagon-  
7 shaped pebble-like projections, other polygonal shaped pebble-like projections,  
8 generally conical pebble-like projections, generally frustoconical pebble-like  
9 projections, generally cylindrical pebble-like projections, generally pyramid-shaped  
10 pebble-like projections, generally cubic pebble-like projections, and combinations  
11 thereof.

1       23. The game ball of claim 16, wherein the plurality of pebble-like  
2 projections are arranged in a generally evenly spaced pattern across at least a portion of  
3 the exposed surface.

1       24. The game ball of claim 16, wherein the plurality of pebble-like  
2 projections are randomly arranged across at least a portion of the exposed surface.

1       25. The game ball of claim 16, wherein each of the pebble-like projections  
2 has a maximum length and a maximum width, and wherein the maximum length and  
3 the maximum width define an aspect ratio of within 0.2 and 5.0.

1       26. The game ball of claim 25, wherein the aspect ratio is within 0.33 and  
2 3.0.

1       27. The game ball of claim 15, wherein the plurality of projections are  
2 spaced apart by a plurality of valleys, and wherein each valley has a width of between  
3 0.005 and 0.250 inches.

1       28. The game ball of claim 15, wherein each valley has a width of between  
2 0.008 and 0.100 inches.

1        29.    The game ball of claim 15, wherein the valleys have a transverse cross-  
2    sectional shape selected from the group consisting of generally U-shaped, generally V-  
3    shaped, generally hemi-spherically shaped, irregularly shaped and combinations  
4    thereof.

1        30.    A game ball comprising:  
2              a casing having a laced region; and  
3              a lacing coupled to the laced region of the casing, the lacing having an  
4    exposed surface, at least a portion of the exposed surface of the lacing having a set of  
5    markings generally configured to be a generally two-dimensional simulation of a  
6    pebbled texture.

1        31.    The game ball of claim 30, wherein the entire exposed surface of the  
2    lacing includes the markings.

1        32.    The game ball of claim 30, wherein the markings are selected from the  
2    group consisting of irregularly shaped markings, generally circular markings, generally  
3    oval markings, generally triangular markings, generally square markings, generally  
4    rectangular markings, generally diamond shaped markings, generally pentagon-shaped  
5    markings, other polygonal shaped markings, and combinations thereof.

1        33.    The game ball of claim 30, wherein markings are arranged in a generally  
2    evenly spaced pattern across at least a portion of the exposed surface.

1        34.    The game ball of claim 30, wherein the markings are randomly arranged  
2    across at least a portion of the exposed surface.

1        35.    The game ball of claim 30, wherein the markings are generally of equal  
2    size.

1           36.     The game ball of claim 30, wherein the markings include projections of  
2     two or more different sizes.

1           37.     A game ball comprising:  
2                 a casing having a laced region; and  
3                 a lacing coupled to the laced region of the casing, the lacing including an  
4     outer material and an inner substrate coupled to the outer material, the outer material  
5     having an exposed surface that is compressible, resilient, and tactile, the outer material  
6     having a density of between 0.2 and 1.3 gr/cm<sup>3</sup> and a durometer of between 10 and 75  
7     on a Shore A hardness scale,

1           38.     The game ball of claim 37, wherein the inner substrate includes an  
2     intermediate material and at least one strand of high tensile strength material.

1           39.     The game ball of claim 38, wherein at least one of the intermediate  
2     material and the strand of high tensile strength material has a density that is greater than  
3     the density of the outer material.

1           40.     The game ball of claim 38, wherein the intermediate material has a  
2     durometer value on the Shore A hardness scale that is greater than the durometer value  
3     of the outer material.

1           41.     The game ball of claim 37, wherein the outer material has a durometer  
2     value on the Shore A hardness scale of within the range of 20 to 70.

1           42.     The game ball of claim 37, wherein the outer material has a density of  
2     between 0.35 to 0.65 gr/cm<sup>3</sup>.

1           43.     The game ball of claim 37, wherein the outer material has a density of  
2     between 0.2 to 0.4 gr/cm<sup>3</sup>.

1       44.     The game ball of claim 37, wherein the outer material has a density of  
2     between 0.55 to 0.90 gr/cm<sup>3</sup>.

1       45.     The game ball of claim 37, wherein the intermediate material is selected  
2     from the group consisting of a vinyl, a plastic, other polymers, a leather, a cloth, a  
3     rubber, an elastomer, and combinations thereof.

1       46.     The game ball of claim 38, wherein the at least one strand of high tensile  
2     strength material is selected from the group consisting of a nylon strand, a polyester  
3     strand, a fiber, a wire, a polymer, and combinations thereof.

1       47.     The game ball of claim 37 wherein the outer material has a modulus of  
2     elasticity of between 30 and 110 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> and a tensile strength between 450 and 600  
3     kg/cm<sup>2</sup>.

1       48.     The game ball of claim 37 wherein the outer material is selected from the  
2     group consisting of a wet process polyurethane, a dry process polyurethane, a  
3     coagulated polyurethane, a polyvinylchloride foam, a rubber, a polymeric material, an  
4     elastomeric material, and a combination thereof.

1       49.     The game ball of claim 37 wherein at least a portion of the exposed  
2     surface includes a pebbled texture.

1       50.     The game ball of claim 49, wherein the pebbled texture comprises a  
2     plurality of pebble-like projections selected from the group consisting of irregularly  
3     shaped pebble-like projections, hemi-spherically shaped pebble-like projections,  
4     generally oval shaped pebble-like projections, generally triangular shaped pebble-like  
5     projections, generally square shaped pebble-like projections, generally rectangular  
6     shaped pebble-like projections, generally diamond shaped pebble-like projections,  
7     generally pentagon-shaped pebble-like projections, other polygonal shaped pebble-like  
8     projections, generally conical pebble-like projections, generally frustoconical pebble-

9 like projections, generally cylindrical pebble-like projections, generally pyramid-shaped  
10 pebble-like projections, generally cubic pebble-like projections, and combinations  
11 thereof.